

NORTHBROOK, ILL. – U.S. Representative Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) sent the following letter to President George Bush today urging him not to pardon former Illinois Governor George Ryan:

December 2, 2008

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C.

Re: Federal Inmate Number 16627-424

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing regarding Federal Inmate Number 16627-424, former Illinois Governor George Ryan.

On December 17, 2003, Mr. Ryan was indicted by a federal grand jury for racketeering, conspiracy, mail fraud, tax evasion and making false statements related to public corruption during his terms as the Secretary of State for Illinois from 1991 to 1999 and as its Governor from 1999 to 2003.

Evidence presented in court proved Mr. Ryan used the resources of the State of Illinois for the personal and financial benefit of himself, members of his family, his campaign organization and political allies.

On April 17, 2006, a federal criminal jury unanimously convicted Mr. Ryan on all 18 counts related to racketeering, bribery, extortion, money laundering and tax fraud. On September 6, 2006, Mr. Ryan was sentenced to six and one-half years in federal prison. On August 21, 2007, the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Mr. Ryan's conviction. On November 6, 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Mr. Ryan's final appeal, forcing him to report to federal prison on November 7, 2007. To date Mr. Ryan has served less than 13 months of his sentence.

George Ryan betrayed the public trust, was convicted beyond the shadow of a doubt by a jury of his peers and lost all of his appeals. His crimes struck at the fabric of our democracy and invited a new wave of public corruption in Illinois.

If we are to stop corruption at the highest levels and restore the public's trust, then this prisoner should serve as similar criminals who cannot hope that political favor can adjust their sentence.

Today, as U.S. Attorney Fitzgerald investigates and prosecutes further allegations of public corruption in Springfield, I urge you not to embolden the corrupt and criminal by pardoning or commuting George Ryan's sentence.

Yours truly,

Mark Steven Kirk
Member of Congress

Cc The White House Counsel
The Attorney General